



The E-Gobrecht

Liberty Seated Collectors Club

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August 2015 (Whole # 127)

ANA Convention is this month!

You probably don't need a reminder but the big event of the year, at least for us numismatists, is in a few weeks!. The annual ANA World's Fair of Money is scheduled for August 11-15 in Chicago (well, actually Rosemont), IL. Many of us are preparing to attend and we're hoping you can also so we can renew old friendships and make new ones (and maybe purchase a Liberty Seated coin or two).

The most important event for club members is the LSCC annual meeting scheduled for Thursday, August 13th from 9-10:30 AM in the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Room 5. A lively event is planned; here is the tentative agenda. Please try to attend.

- 0900-0915 – Call meeting to order, Q. David Bowers announcement, audience acknowledgement (Gerry Fortin)
- 0915-0925 – Group photo (Bill Bugert)
- 0925-0935 – Member introductions (Audience)
- 0935-0945 – Awards presentation (Bill Bugert)
- 0945-0950 – Treasurer's report (Craig Eberhart)
- 0945-0950 – Club business (Gerry Fortin)
- 0950-1000 – Newman Portal Introduction (Len Augsburger)
- 1000-1030 – Club Benefit Auction

From Wednesday thru Friday, the LSCC will have a club table on the bourse floor, table #1969. Stop by and say "Hi."

Also note, there will be two educational "Money Talks" given by club members Dennis Fortier and John Frost. See the calendar on the next page for details.

The lots for the 2015 Club Treasury Benefit Auction will be viewable at our Club table (#1969) on Wednesday afternoon (August 12th). If you plan to bid in the auction please stop by if time permits. The LSCC Secretary/Treasurer, Craig Eberhart, would appreciate meeting you and confirming your membership in the Liberty Seated Collectors Club.

Hope to see you there!

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The *E-Gobrecht* is an award winning informal electronic publication of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC). The LSCC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the attributions of the Liberty Seated Coin series. The LSCC provides the information contained in this email newsletter from various sources free of charge as a general service to the membership and others with this numismatic interest. You do not have to be a LSCC member to benefit from this newsletter; subscription to the *E-Gobrecht* is available to anyone. All disclaimers are in effect as the completeness and/or accuracy of the information contained herein cannot be completely verified. Contact information is included on the last page.



Auction News

by Jim Gray, LSCC #664

The **Stack's Bowers Galleries** Baltimore Sale contained an AU50 1846 dime that did not sell. A VF35 1858-S hit \$999 and an AU53 1870-S sold for \$1,116. Two 1873-CC AU dimes were cleaned and one sold for \$5,581 and the other did not sell. A VF25 1860-S quarter sold for \$4,406 as did an AU58 1871-S. A VF25 1870-CC half dollar hammered for \$5,875.

An 1851 dollar had mint details, but cleaned, still went for \$23,500. An (ICG) MS62 1872-CC dollar did not sell.

The **Heritage Auctions** FUN Sale contained a MS62 1838-O half dime that went for \$4,700. A VF35 1873-CC dime sold for \$11,163.

An 1862-S AU53 quarter was worth \$2,115. 1871-CC and 1873-CC quarters graded G6 were sold for \$8,225 and \$4,465.

An AU58 1852 half dollar sold for \$2,115 as did an AU55 1856-S specimen.

Three 1872-CC dollars graded VF25, XF40, and XF45 realized \$3,290, \$5,405, and \$5,170.

[Editor's Note: Jim will be attending this year's ANA in Rosemont. Look for him Wednesday on the bourse floor and at the club meeting on Thursday morning.]

LSCC Calendar

August 12, 2015. **ANA World's Fair of Money**, [Money Talk](#) *Overrated/Underrated Liberty Seated Coinage*, Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL, Wednesday at 3 PM in Room 6. Presented by LSCC Member Dennis Fortier.

August 12-14, 2015. **ANA World's Fair of Money**, [LSCC Table](#), Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL, Wednesday thru Friday, Bourse floor area, Table 1969.

August 13, 2015. **ANA World's Fair of Money**, [LSCC Annual Meeting and Club Benefit Auction](#), Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL, Thursday at 9 AM in Room 5.

August 14, 2015. **ANA World's Fair of Money**, [Money Talk](#) *Double Dimes and the Amazing Discovery at the Carson City Mint*, Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL, Friday at 9 AM in Room 6. Presented by LSCC Member John Frost.

August 21-22, 2015. **Carson City Mint Coin Show and Fair**, [LSCC Table](#), Carson Nugget Ballroom, 507 North Carson Street, Carson City, NV.

October 1, 2015. Deadline for submission of articles and advertisements for the Fall *Gobrecht Journal* Issue #124.



Regional News

by Dennis Fortier, LSCC #2016

What a year it has been since the LSCC leadership transition. In those last twelve months, the club has added 95 new members. This does not include returning members, just new members. A few years ago, the club membership stood at 535; now it is well over 650! This is a record! This is remarkable growth and it is due in large part to the hard work of the Regional Team and the vision of the leadership. Many accolades must go to the Regional Directors and the other volunteers who provide their kind support to the club.

From time to time, I hear back from a new member remarking on how impressed they were to receive an initial phone call from the club along with providing club information and setting the expectation for the arrival of a welcome package including the latest Gobrecht Journal issue. I couldn't think of a better LSCC Ambassador in that function than Carl Feldman. As membership growth continues, the pool of volunteers also expands and allows the club to reach as many parts of the country as possible.

Another major goal of the Regional Team is to try and help every member value their membership as highly as we do ours. With quality articles in both award winning club publications, regional meetings, educational seminars, and club tables to reconnect and talk Liberty Seated coins, we hoped that members gain a sense of pride in belonging to a world class organization.

FUN and Baltimore were pretty quiet as is usual for the summer, but Paul Kluth managed to sign-up one new member at Baltimore. There were about twenty members at the Baltimore meeting hosted by Len Augsburg. Len explained the Heritage system for auction lot cataloging and description writing followed by Gerry's presentation on the 1865 F-102c proof medal turn pieces brought to the meeting.

There was a lively discussion as to whether the F-102c was a die state or error.

It's ANA time! What an active ANA this promises to be. The annual club meeting hosted by club President Gerry Fortin will be on Thursday Aug 13, 9-10:30 AM, in Rm 5. Among the many planned events will be a members-only club auction conducted by Heritage's Bob Merrill, with some rare and unique items available. Be sure and check out what the well dressed club officers will be wearing.

Also at the ANA, Dennis Fortier will present *Overrated/Underrated Liberty Seated Coinage* in Room 6 on Wednesday August 12th at 3 PM, and John Frost will present *Double Dimes and the Amazing Discovery at the Carson City Mint* in Room 6 on Friday August 14th at 9 AM. Be sure to tell any non-members you know about these informative presentations.

There will be a club table Wednesday thru Friday hosted by club members, so please stop by for a chat and review the unusual and rare items on display. The club benefit auction lots will be available for inspection at the club table on Wednesday afternoon.

The Carson City Mint Coin Show and Fair is scheduled for Aug. 21-22. The show and fair are one event and will take place concurrently. The coin show is located across the street in the Carson Nugget Ballroom, 507 N. Carson Street, and the coin education fair will occur at the museum, 600 N. Carson Street. John Frost will attend and well represent the LSCC.



The Curious Collector

by Len Augsburger, LSCC #1271

It is that time of the month when the *E-Gobrecht* editor asks for a column, and, given your correspondent's usual procrastination, the interval between writing and publishing is typically

measured in hours. This month we clean a few notes out of the virtual file and our average delay might now be slightly less than what you would expect from a major airline. Poor Bill! Back next month with a full recap of the ANA proceedings.

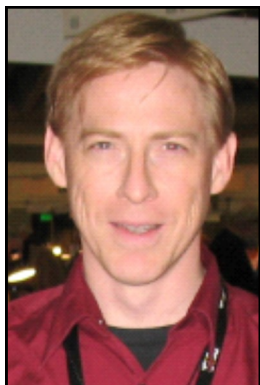
Eric Schena has a recent *Numismatist* article regarding the EVERMAN counterstamp. Counterstamped coins are experiencing something of a resurgence with the increasing capability of electronic search. Now anyone with an Internet connection can type their counterstamp into Google and see what comes out the other end. Previously researchers relied on tools like old city directories, but these are difficult to access and only take you so far. In any case, the EVERMAN stamp is known on only ten coins, and, unlike most counterstamps, a substantial portion of these are gold coins including a \$50 slug. Schena looks at where the coins were discovered, their mintmarks (three Liberty Seated examples are known, two of them from New Orleans), and takes his best guess at the identity of the counterstamper – one Lewis Everman, a Tennessee silversmith.

In the latest American Numismatic Society Magazine, Gilles Bransbourg does something I have always thought about but never attempted. Bransbourg got access to a group of “fountain coins” – in this case, all the foreign coins deposited in the Bryant Park fountain in New York City over a one year period. The park cashes in the American coins (about \$3,000 worth per year), but it is not worth exchanging the foreign coins, most of nominal value and from many different countries. This is not a bag of a couple hundred one-euro pieces! The fountain produced 732 foreign coins over a one year period and these were sent to the American Numismatic Society for

investigation. Bransbourg's children were assigned the interesting task of identifying each coin and entering the data into a spreadsheet – country of origin, denomination, and so forth. “Dumplings from Chinatown” were said to be the compensation. The coins came from 86 different countries, and Bransbourg correlates the countries of origin with demographics of international New York visitors (a high correlation is demonstrated). He also looks at which countries represent the highest aggregated value and which represent the highest value per coin. From there follows a historical discourse on the significance of throwing a coin into a fountain – the practice seems to have originated in ancient times with animal sacrifice (and, more gruesomely, humans in some cases), which evolved to votive deposits of coins and other objects. Bransbourg traces deposits into water back to Roman times, most notably Coventina's Well, a hoard that revealed 16,000 coins when excavated in 1876. All those coins add up – today, the Trevi fountain in Rome takes in an astounding \$4,000 per day – who would have thought?

Planning for the upcoming ANA Convention in Chicago continues apace and this year brings a first for the LSCC, with a printed auction catalog that was distributed along with the July edition of the *Gobrecht Journal*. We have 15 lots in the auction, a nice mix of coins and literature that will appeal to the Liberty Seated collector. Email bidding so far is active and anyone who will not be in attendance may submit bids to me at leonard_augsburger@hotmail.com.

As many of you know, I am now working full-time for the Newman Numismatic Portal (NNP). The NNP seeks to unite the world's numismatic knowledge and make it freely available online. Come and hear more at the ANA – I will be presenting at the NBS Symposium, Thursday, August 13, 11:30 AM in Room 22 of the convention center.



Quarter of the Month

by Greg Johnson, LSCC #1460

It seems like many recent columns have been showing and discussing cuds. Though cuds and late die states are interesting, this month is a good time to change speeds and feature something different. So, for no particular reason other than it is a most interesting and important issue, this month's topic is the very rare branch mint proof 1891-O quarter.

(4,540,000) and a relative handful of quarters (68,000) were produced.

Larry Briggs, in his 1991 book *The Comprehensive Encyclopedia of United States Liberty Seated Quarters* noted that "UNC's are usually proof-like with two specimen or branch mint proof coins seen and verified." It is a fairly simple matter, in 2015, to check the Heritage archive and confirm two coins, one in an ANACS Proof 62 holder and the other encapsulated as NGC Spec-



The Branch Mint in New Orleans was opened in 1838 and struck gold and silver United States coins continuously until 1861 when it was taken over by the Confederacy. Randy Wiley authored two (highly recommended) articles concerning the New Orleans mint in 1861. The first reported a detailed die study of the 1861-O half dollar¹. The second described the history of the mint during 1861², specifically which political entity was in control and responsible for coinage, and connected that information to the known varieties of 1861-O half dollars. The last quarter minted at the New Orleans mint prior to the civil war was dated 1860. When the mint resumed operation in 1879 it produced Morgan silver dollars and a few gold coins, but no seated coinage until the final year of the series in 1891. That year, a rather large number of dimes

men 66. The latter coin, shown above, most recently sold at auction in August 2013 for \$129,250. More than two of the branch mint proofs may exist but a third specimen cannot be confirmed using easily available information. The Heritage catalog from the August 2013 sale also refers to only two confirmed examples. The NGC Census lists a Proof 65 and a Proof 66 but those two listings very likely represent the same coin; Heritage has sold one of each and it is clearly the same coin in different holders. PCGS has not certified any 1891-O proof quarter dollars.

Another contribution to uncertainty regarding the precise number of 1891-O branch mint proofs is the fact that uncirculated specimens of the issue are

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The Strike Zone

by Rich Hundertmark, LSCC #2347

**A float back in time :
Harper's Ferry in 1859,
a River's power, and the early Coin Steam Press**

Modified fly fishing proverb of the month:

**"Coin collecting is the pursuit of the elusive but attainable."
- Unknown author, found on wall of Angler's Inn, Harper's Ferry, WV**

The month of July many times takes me away from coin collecting to pursue my other passions, such as fly-fishing, and this year was no exception as I planned an adventure to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia in pursuit of trophy smallmouth bass on the fly.

Located at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, Harpers Ferry played a significant role in our county's early history, first established as a town in 1763 and soon after becoming strategically important when in 1796, ground was broken to build an armory and arsenal with the two rivers facilitating the manufacturing and distribution of our nation's early firearms.

Years later in October of 1859, the history of Harpers Ferry would forever change as the abolitionist John Brown led a group of 21 men in a raid on the arsenal in a failed attempt to use the captured weapons to initiate a slave uprising throughout the South. Many attribute the shots that were fired as the first of the Civil War, and, in fact, from 1861-1865 the town changed hands between northern and southern troops eight times. After the war ended, the armory was disbanded by the army, and the town never again reclaimed its earlier prominence.

When drifting down and fishing

the Potomac I was struck by the power of the waterway, and it was easy to see how this natural resource was so significant to the transportation and goods production of the 19th century. I wondered when steam

technology was first used in the manufacture of our nation's coins, and with a bit of research found that the introduction of the coin steam press occurred at the Philadelphia Mint in 1836 as pictured, right before the initial change in design from Bust to Liberty Seated coinage.

Oh yes, the fishing. Well my goal was to successfully land and release unharmed a 17" smallmouth taken on the fly, a prize certainly worthy of fiberglass trophy replication. Near the end of a long trip, I came very close, landing a measured 15" smallie that wore out both fish and fisherman.

So my pursuit of that special trophy smallmouth will continue and I now turn my attention back to "trophy" coins and the upcoming Chicago ANA next month.

Hoping everyone is having their own great summer adventures!

Coin press image courtesy of
www.Wikipedia.com





MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Liberty Seated Collectors Club

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Membership fee: \$20.00 per year
Fill in the above information and send it to:

Dennis Fortier
P.O. Box 1841
Pawtucket, RI 02862

Membership applications may also be downloaded from <http://www.lscweb.org/>.

The Quarter of the Month (Continued from page 5)

normally proof-like. Briggs estimated that fewer than 20 mint state examples exist. Population reports from the third party grading services appear to support that estimate. The table below illustrates the uncirculated populations at NGC and PCGS. It also seems likely the either the PCGS MS67 or the NGC MS68, or both, represent the Eliasberg example which sold raw as an MS66 in 1997.

Grade	61	62	63	64	65	67	68	Total
PCGS		2	2	1	2	1		8
NGC	2	4		3	3		1	13

The branch mint proofs were struck using Briggs' die marriage 2-B, the scarcest of the three known die marriages used to produce business strikes.

¹ Wiley, Randy. "Die Marriages of 1861-O Half Dollars." *Gobrecht Journal* #94, Nov. 2005: 3-28.

² Wiley, Randy. "Coining Authority and Rarity for Die Marriages of 1861-O Half Dollars." *Gobrecht Journal* #97, Nov. 2006: 34-49.



LSCC Member in the Spotlight:

Jason Feldman, LSCC #2003

by Tony Barreca, LSCC #2151

Tony. *When did you first become interested in coin collecting and numismatics? Was there a specific experience or set of experiences that triggered it? What series did you start collecting when you did?*

Jason. I started collecting Mercury dimes at the age of eight.

My father really helped me to start the hobby. Once a month he would take me to buy a proof set. I recall going to Sidney Smith and Sons to look at coins. It was always a real treat.

Back in those days, Miami was a large coin-collecting city. We had ANA conventions and it was a great place to be a collector. We would attend a monthly show at the now closed Hollywood Mall. I went every month. These shows were popular, as Miami Beach was a huge place for people to visit. If I am not wrong, it was at one of these shows that our own LSCC was formed?

Anyway, I found in Mercury dimes the chance to buy very high-grade obsolete coins for a few dollars. I was able to hunt out fully struck examples for not a lot of money and at that time my resources were very limited.

Interestingly my first variety discovery was a 1941-S/S dime. This was back in the late 1980s. I was very excited at the time. Then, I obtained a 1936/36 double die for \$2 in UNC and I recall a dealer who wanted to pay me \$250 for that coin! To this day, I still have it along with the ANACS photo certificate grading it MS 65/65.

I think it was the ability to locate such gem coins for a fairly low price that got me so interested. Ironically all these years later, young children can still find gem examples raw for under \$10.

When I was in high school, I met the daughter of Frank Sedgwick, who was a well-known coin dealer. She was my Spanish teacher and offered to sponsor a coin club. I was able to grow the membership to over 20 people. Most have stopped collecting, but it sure was fun.

Coins to me represented a good store of value, something where if you had the proper education, it could really pay off. They were miniature works of art you could hold and appreciate.

Tony. *How did you initially become interested in Liberty Seated (LS) coins? Which LS denominations do you focus on currently? Previously?*

Jason. My goal is to finish the entire series. My main focus is dimes, but I have complete sets of half-dimes through half-dollars.

Tony. *Within the series of LS coins you focus on, do you consider yourself a variety collector? If so, what is your approach to variety collecting?*

Jason. I do love varieties. I started collecting dimes by Greer and then moved over to Fortin. I collect all series by variety.

Tony. *How long have you been an LSCC member? In your opinion, what are the main advantages of belonging to the club?*

Jason. I joined about eight years ago. It opened so many doors. I feel it is the best choice I have made in collecting. I could not have built a collection without the LSCC.

Tony. *Do you ever participate in Club activities? If so, which ones? Have you ever visited the Clubs message boards? Attended a meeting in person? Which activities could you see yourself participating in at a future time? Have you ever actively*



LSCC Member in the Spotlight *Continued from page 8)*

recommended that a collector friend join the LSCC? If not, why not?

Jason. The message boards were something that Gerry Fortin and I created back in 2005 and I think I have posted more on them than anyone else. I am active, and intend to remain so.

Currently, I am the Southern Regional Director and have been hosting the Orlando FUN meetings for several years now, as well as coordinating various social functions in Orlando and Baltimore.

Tony. *If you could change one thing about the LSCC, what would it be?*

Jason. Getting more members to get more active. Doing so is very rewarding on many levels.

Tony. *In your collecting career, what was the greatest coup you ever pulled off when purchasing a coin? Your biggest mistake?*

Jason. I feel my discovery of rotated dimes within the series has been extensive. They are so very rare and hard to find.

My biggest mistake is not buying an AU 1839-O half-dime when I had the chance. It makes me sad.

Tony. *Do you think of the hobby as being a form of investment as well? If so, how do you approach your use of coins as an investment vehicle?*

Jason. I used to view coins as a profit center but now I buy mostly for the love of the hobby, and I do love it!

I still invest in certain rare coins for profit such as the highly under-rated 1851-O dime. My aggressive purchase of the PCGS AU53 1843-O dime led to a major adjustment of the pricing guides. There is money to be made while having fun!

Tony: *While we don't want to make anyone uncomfortable by getting too personal, it would be a real opportunity for your fellow*

club members to get to know you a bit if you'd also answer one or more of these optional questions.

Tony. *What is/was your work/career?*

Jason. I have been a real-estate developer for 20+ years. I develop properties for Walgreen's, CVS, or other Fortune 500 tenants.

Tony. *What other hobbies/interests do you have besides numismatics?*

Jason. I love cars, watches, and my two young boys.

Tony: *Is there anything about your family or family history that you'd like to mention?*

Jason. While my father lost interest long ago, the Feldman Family has been collecting coins for over 50 years.

Tony. *What is your greatest or most memorable personal achievement?*

Jason. Earning my 32nd degree as a Master Mason at the age of 35. This is something people very seldom do. I joined the Shriners at the age of 36. These are wonderful organizations that do a lot of good things. I am proud to be a Master Mason and Shriner.





Packing the Kegs: Coins in Transit

by Jim Laughlin, LSCC #876

In reading Q. David Bower's article, *The SS Republic Shipwreck Excavation Project: The Coin Collection* (2009), I was intrigued as it contained the inventory by date and mintmark of some 42,000 half dollars recovered from the bottom of the Atlantic. The SS Republic had left New York for New Orleans on October 17, 1865; sinking off the coast of Georgia on October 25, 1865. Among this inventory were six 1865 San Francisco Mint half dollars that had been struck earlier in the year. These had somehow made it all the way from San Francisco to New York City and then had been transshipped out of New York bound now for New Orleans. These coins were at most ten and a half months old and they already traveled thousands of miles. (32,000 halves had been struck at San Francisco in January; 65,000 in February; none in March; 42,000 in April; 74,000 in May; 42,000 in June; a total of 255,000 for the first six months of 1865. Unfortunately, I have yet to locate the monthly mintage figures for the last six months of 1865. The reported mintage was 675,000 pieces, so there should be an additional 420,000 pieces struck over the next July-December 1865 period. I was remotely hoping to have found that the San Francisco Mint had produced all the half dollars early in the year, so you could compare the last date made to the date the SS Republic sank, but the San Francisco Mint was clearly producing halves almost every month, so the idea became rather moot.)

In Bowers' article are color pictures and graphics drawn showing the in-situ location of the coins on the sea floor and the remains of a wooden keg they likely had been packed in. He notes that some of the half dollars were found with imprints of canvass on their surfaces and that it was likely the silver coins had been bagged in canvas sacks before being placed in the keg for transit.

Having just read Bowers' article, I read Paul Kluth's two part article that appeared in the latest *Gobrecht Journal* (#123) as well as the *E-Gobrecht* issue of July 2015 regarding a beautifully made wooden chest

with clear markings that it was designed and built by the US Mint at Philadelphia, but the quandary was for what purpose? The chest is an intriguing enigma. Having Kegs and wooden chests on my mind, I recalled coming across a few period newspaper articles that described large coin shipments using kegs or boxes during the Liberty Seated period.

First is from an investigation into the solvency of the Bank of Missouri in 1840. While the testimony is regarding gold coin, the same procedures were likely undertaken with large amounts of silver coin:

December 19, 1840, *Boon's Lick Times* (Fayette, Missouri)

Examination report of Committee appointed to examine into the general condition of the Bank of Missouri.

Affidavit of Mr. Childs.

Nathaniel Childs, jr., being sworn, deposeth and saith, that he is second teller of the Bank of the State of Missouri, and in that capacity has charge of the specie, (silver and gold), on hand from time to time in the vault of said Bank. That of the 16th or 17th day of January last, being directed by H. Shurlds, Cashier of said Bank to put up one hundred thousand dollars in gold for shipment to New York, this deponent went into the vault of said Bank, and carried up stairs all the gold then on hand, except one bag, and upon the table immediately back of the discount clerk's desk, about nine o'clock in the morning of the said day above stated, commence to assort and count up said gold. This deponent further states that he assorted all of the foreign coin, placing each kind by itself upon tray until it was all counted out, after which it was carefully put up in small bags, as far as possible in even amounts, as will appear by the accompanying table of the number of bags with their respective kind of coin and amount contained in each. This deponent further states that after the gold was placed in the several bags, there was a small strip of paper having the number of pieces of

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coin, with the gross amount marked upon it, and placed in the top of the bag, the mouth of each still remaining open, the several bags were then removed to one end of the table, and placed close together, and from thence to the other end, where the strip of paper was taken out—the amount taken down on a clean sheet of paper—the strip of paper then replaced in the bag and it tied round with a piece of red tape—after the amount of each bag was thus taken down and the aggregate ascertained, there was a comparison made with the statement upon the specie book, up to that day, in order to ascertain its correctness, the amount was then found to agree with the specie account, which satisfied this deponent, that the gold was correctly counted.

The keg, which was one of the common specie kegs used in the Bank of Missouri, was then brought by Mr. Hammond, the porter of the Bank and the gold handed by Mr. Dent, one bag at a time, from the table to this deponent, and by him packed in the keg, after all the bags were packed, (twenty three in number) the keg was found to not quite full, and to fill it full so as to prevent its rattling when rolling, there was put into the top a gunny-bag upon which this deponent stepped with his feet in order to press down, so as to fit in the head of the keg. This deponent further states, that the keg was packed full and tight, so as to prevent any rattling being made by it when rolling; and he further states, that about three o'clock of the same day, the said keg was placed upon a dray at the door of the Bank of Missouri, and started for the steamer *Geo. Collier*, then at the landing, in the City of St. Louis.

Signed Nathaniel Childs, Jr.

The following involved a robbery of the United States Express Company in 1853 of \$50,000, as related twenty years later.

January 17, 1877, *The Grange Advance* (Red Wing, Minnesota)

"...In 1849, I believe it was, the United States Express Company was organized and in 1853 we were young and poor. At that time bankers were in the habit of shipping gold boxes by our company."

"The boxes for this purpose were all of a uniform size, and made of pine—inch and a half clear lumber. The whole box was dovetailed together, except

the cover, and this, after the gold was put in, was fastened down by eight large screws sunk into the wood. The holes on the top of the screws were filled with molten sealing wax, and a seal stamped on. There were besides this six holes, one fourth of an inch in diameter, through the cover. These were also filled with sealing wax, and stamped. Thus it was a matter of utter impossibility to remove the cover without evidence of it".

"It was in 1853, that our Company was the victim of the great robbery of \$50,000 in gold coin that filled us with dismay and the country with astonishment. In those days railroading had not arrived at the perfection of the present, and especially in the West, and the means for the detection of crime were not as effective. But to the robbery: It was, as I have said, in the year 1853. Our agent at Dubuque received from a banker there a large amount of gold coin for the United States sub-treasury in New York. The coin was packed in boxes as above described, each box containing \$50,000. The boxes were all carefully sealed, and every formality required by our company strictly complied with. At that time the line from Dubuque to New York was divided into runs, with relays or messengers. Thus, one messenger staged it from Dubuque to the nearest railway terminal point; at that place he transferred his charge to another messenger who ran to Chicago, where he was relieved by one who ran to Detroit; another run was from Detroit to Buffalo, and the last run from Buffalo to New York. Of course this shipment referred to had to pass through a great many hands before it was safely deposited at its destination. At last the boxes arrived at the sub-treasury. The exact number, was delivered in good order, every box exactly alike, every box bore the exact stamps, and every box weighed exactly the same. So far, all right."

"But a terrible denouement was in store for us, for when these boxes were opened by the proper person, one of them, instead of containing \$50,000 in gold coin, was filled with lead. You can imagine the consternation of the officers of our company at experiencing such a heavy loss, for which it was responsible and had to be made good. Of course the matter got out, and created intense excitement all over the country. It was plainly apparent to us that we had got two things to do: Pay the loss and ferret out the thieves at all hazards and at any cost."

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“We kept our own counsel and went to work quietly and systematically, and put one of our shrewdest and keenest detectives at the work. The first thing to do was to trace back that shipment over various trains and ascertain what messenger or other official had charge of it. This we did quietly and without exciting any suspicion among our employees. It was a long time before we got a clew, but get it we did, and you may surmise we held on to it. Among our messengers was one that had charge of that shipment between Chicago and Detroit, and we had reason to believe the change of boxes had occurred on his run; but how, or by whom, we could not determine. The messenger was a great favorite, prompt and faithful in the performance of his duty, and remained at his post after the robbery, pursuing the same course and habits of life that he had previous to our loss.”

Well, as this article is quite long, the point was they shipped coin in boxes, designed such that the tops and sides could not be tampered with without destroying the wax seals. Not to leave people hanging regarding the crime, the carpenter who had made the shipping boxes was able to identify that one of the boxes was not his; he hadn't made the one later found filled with lead. It was made of a different species of pine than he used in Dubuque, and he believed it had likely been made in either Chicago or Detroit where that species of pine was used. The detective focused on the messenger for this route, but was perplexed as the messenger continued to work diligently and exhibited no signs of new found wealth. Eventually, the detective uncovered that this messenger had had three close friends that had disappeared about the same time of the robbery. Eventually these associates were located in Boston, living the high life, and were eventually arrested and convicted of the crime. Apparently they used the friendship with the messenger to travel with him in the express car on earlier coin shipments, and must have at that time observed and noted how the coin boxes were constructed and it is supposed they made impressions of the wax seals that were affixed; later having similar sealing equipment made that produced similar impression. The friends were able to build a similar box, filled with equivalent lead weight, and sealed with the correct looking seals; after ascertain

the date of another coin shipment were able at some point to switch one of the boxes. It seems the messenger himself may have been oblivious to his friend's deceit, as it appeared he didn't get any of the stolen loot. The company never prosecuted him, but discharged him for “want of attention”. And yes, they were “clews” back then, not clues.

And these might still be there...unlikely, but...

February 13, 1852, The Athens Post (Athens Tenn.)

A keg containing five thousand Mexican dollars was lost on Saturday last, while being hoisted on board the Havre packet St, Nicholas, at New York, the contents falling in the dock.

(dock : the area of water between two piers that receives a vessel for unloading)

Sources:

Q. David Bower article, *The SS Republic Shipwreck Excavation Project: The Coin Collection* (2009). <http://www.shipwreck.net/featuresarchpapers09.php>

Newspaper Source: Library of Congress <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>





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